

Bears making themselves known in Western Nevada

Bear sightings have been heavy this weekend throughout much of western Nevada.

West Reno has two bear traps set in the Caughlin Ranch-Mayberry-Juniper area. Residents on the west side of Carson City have called Nevada Department of Wildlife officials on Saturday and Sunday mornings with reports of a black bear visiting backyards. In Gardnerville, a bear up a tree in a rural area near town was harassed by Karelian bear dogs and chased back into more traditional bear habitat.

In Yerington, a bear was trapped on Saturday and was to be released into the Pine Grove Mountains southeast of Yerington. The 6-year-old female had never been handled before by NDOW.

“She will be fitted with an ear tag and more importantly, a satellite collar and she will become part of our long-term research project studying the population of black bears in Nevada,” NDOW biologist Carl Lackey said in a statement.

The satellite collars send a GPS signal periodically to researchers who can follow the movements of the bears fitted with such collars.

“These movements tell us what habitats the bears utilize, where the females give birth to their cubs and a myriad other details on the bear’s lives that we could only wish to know just a few years ago,” Lackey said.

Bear activity in western Nevada is expected to be “busy and active” for at least the next month. Sierra Nevada black bears usually go into hibernation in between Thanksgiving and Christmas as food sources become harder to find.